Atta shortage in Swabi continues

By Our Correspondent

SWABI, Dec 31: Despite efforts and local administration's claim of controlling atta shortage the residents of Swabi are still facing acute flour shortage.

To cope with the shortage the local administration raided a number of atta distribution centre, checked the commodities price at the retail shop and urged the dealers to sell atta according to the fixed rate. The dealers were also frequently warned that those who found overcharging the consumers would be arrested.

The police raided a number of atta depots but nothing was found. All the centres were without atta.

Many areas of Swabi including Nawankilli, Yarhussain, Chota Lahore, Thordher, Saleem Khan Zada, Kalukhan and district headquarter are badly affected as they are getting less atta than the actual demand.

A resident of Maneri said that atta had become an uphill task. "You have to stand in a long queue for more than four or five hours to get a small bag. Most of the atta seekers come back empty handed." Similar complaints have also been made by the dwellers of a number of urban and rural localities.

According to an official the situation had deteriorated after supply from Mardan and Haripur had been stopped and the Punjab government had also not allowed the movement of atta. Those who wanted to bring atta to Swabi or other areas of NWFP from Punjab were arrested.

When contacted an official of the Swabi Flour Mills said that their quota had been further slashed from 600 bags to 250 and no tangible step had been taken to increase it.

He said if the wheat quota was increased the mill administration would not be able to supply more atta due to power loadshedding.

A dealer said that their quota was not fixed but the were given different quantity on different days.

Meanwhile, after the three days, the WAPDA again had resorted to loadshedding in Swabi. The power supply remained suspended for about ten to twelve hours every days.